

## 4.3 Employment

---

NLSY97 respondents answer questions about current and previously held jobs; there is no limit to the number or types of jobs a respondent may report. These data are collected about every employer for whom the respondent worked since the last interview so that a complete picture of the respondent's employment can be constructed. Unlike earlier NLS surveys, the employment section distinguishes between four types of jobs: employee-type jobs, freelance jobs, self-employment, and military service.

*User Notes:* Most age restrictions in the CPS, employment, and training sections of the questionnaire refer to age as of the survey date, rather than age as of December 31, 1996, as in all other sections. However, the check items that route respondents through the round 4 employee and freelance sections are based on age as of December 31, 1996. Users should carefully examine the questionnaire and documentation to ensure that they have correctly identified the age restrictions for a given set of questions. Note that all respondents were at least 14 years old in round 3, so the age 14 restrictions were dropped beginning with that survey.

Users should also keep in mind that the NLSY97 questions based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) were not included in the rounds 2 and 3 surveys.

### Employee Jobs

For each employee-type job—defined as a situation in which the respondent has an ongoing relationship with a specific employer—youths age 14 and older are asked about the job's characteristics as of the time they started that job. The survey solicits similar end-date information for each employee-type job lasting more than 13 weeks. For jobs that end after the respondent's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (or for on-going jobs held by youths age 16 or older), detailed questions are asked about the workplace. Additional questions similar to the Current Population Survey (CPS), asked of respondents age 15 or older in the rounds 1 and 4 *Youth Questionnaire*, determined respondents' labor force status in the week before the interview.

### Freelance Jobs

Questions specific to freelance employment—that is, jobs for which the respondent performed one or a few tasks for several people without a specific boss, or in which the respondent worked for himself or herself—are unique to the NLSY97. This survey captures many typical youth jobs, such as lawn-mowing and baby-sitting, which are often missing from an employment history. In this section of the survey, respondents age 14 and older are asked about their experiences with freelance jobs. For respondents age

12 or 13, the survey asks these questions about all jobs (without explicitly distinguishing between employee and freelance jobs).

### **Self-Employment**

In rounds 1–3, respondents who are age 16 or older and who usually earn \$200 or more per week at a freelance job were considered self-employed. Additional information was collected about those jobs as part of the freelance section of the survey. In round 4, respondents were routed through different paths based on age. Those born in 1980–82 answered questions about self-employment in the regular employee jobs section of the questionnaire (regardless of amount earned at that job). Younger respondents born in 1983–84 who meet the earnings requirement continued to list self-employment in the freelance section. In addition to answering the freelance or employee jobs questions, these respondents were asked to provide more information about their self-employment. See section 4.3.8, “Self-Employment Characteristics,” for more details.

*User Notes:* Users should note that these data are employer-based, not job-based. As a result, the information collected reflects the time a respondent spent with an employer (or self-employed) and not changes of responsibilities or jobs during that period.

Table 1 overviews the *NLSY97 User's Guide* subtopics available in this section and any global restrictions affecting those subtopics. Users should note that certain questions or groups of questions within a subtopic may have additional restrictions. Please consult the NLSY97 questionnaire and codebook for more information on particular questions.

4.3 Table 1. Employment Subtopics and Universe Restrictions

NLSY97 User's Guide Subtopic	Round 1 Universe (Age as of interview date)	Round 2 Universe (Age as of interview date)	Round 3 Universe (Age <sup>1</sup> as of interview date)	Round 4 Universe (Age as of interview date)
4.3.1 Employers & Jobs	≥14 ≥16 for military service	≥14 ≥16 for military service	all respondents, except ≥16 for military service	all respondents, except ≥16 for military service
4.3.2 Fringe Benefits	≥16, for each employee job lasting ≥ 13 weeks	≥16, for each employee job lasting ≥ 13 weeks	≥16, for each employee job lasting ≥ 13 weeks	≥16, for each employee job lasting ≥ 13 weeks
4.3.3 Gaps in Employment	≥14	≥14	all respondents	all respondents
4.3.4 Industry	≥14 with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	≥14 with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	all resp. with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	all resp. with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed
4.3.5 Job Search CPS Questions Employee Jobs Questions	≥15 ≥16 with employee job	— ≥16 with employee job	— ≥16 with employee job	all respondents ≥16 with employee job
4.3.6 Labor Force Status	≥15	—	—	all respondents
4.3.7 Occupation	≥14 with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	≥14 with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	all resp. with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed	all resp. with employee job or ≥16 and self-employed
4.3.8 Self-Employment Characteristics	≥16 and earn ≥ \$200/week	≥16 and earn ≥ \$200/week	≥16 and earn ≥ \$200/week	≥16 and earn ≥ \$200/week or born in 1980–82
4.3.9 Tenure	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all respondents	all respondents
4.3.10 Time Spent at Work	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all respondents	all respondents
4.3.11 Wages	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all resp. with freelance job or ≥14 with employee job	all respondents	all respondents
4.3.12 Work Experience	≥14	≥14	all respondents	all respondents

<sup>1</sup> Note that all respondents were at least 14 years old by the round 3 interview date.

The employment sections of the questionnaire are somewhat complex. Before beginning analysis, researchers must understand the structure of each round's questionnaire, particularly the way in which jobs are classified as employee, freelance, or self-employment. It is important to note that this classification depends in part on the survey round and the respondent's age. In rounds 1 and 2, employee jobs were recorded in the first part of the YEMP section, administered only to respondents age 14 or older as of the interview date. The second part of the YEMP section collected information about freelance jobs of respondents age 14 and older and all jobs of respondents age 12 or 13 (the implicit assumption being that respondents younger than 14 are not likely to hold employee jobs). If the respondent was at least 16 years old and made at least \$200/week in a freelance job, the job was classified as self-employment and an extra series of questions was asked during the freelance section.

In round 3, all respondents were at least age 14 by the interview date, so the age restriction for employee jobs was no longer necessary. The structure of the section remained largely the same, with a division between employee and freelance jobs. Self-employment was classified in the same way as in the earlier rounds.

In round 4 the section was redesigned. Respondents born in 1980–82 (who were mostly age 18 and older when the round 4 field period began) were asked about employee jobs and self-employment at the same time. In addition, the minimum income requirement from the freelance section no longer applied; jobs could be classified as self-employment regardless of earnings. However, respondents born in 1983–84 (who were mostly age 16 or 17 when the round 4 field period began) continued to describe employee and freelance jobs separately. Data on self-employment jobs were still collected in the freelance section, and freelance jobs still had to meet the income criteria to qualify as self-employment.

Figures 1 and 2 capture the flow of the employment sections in the various rounds. These figures are intended to picture the major universe restrictions and question topics asked of various groups of respondents about different types of jobs. They are **not** a complete representation of every question in the YEMP section of the questionnaire. Figure 1 focuses on rounds 1–3; users should note that questions asked only in rounds 2 and 3 are indicated in italics. Figure 2 illustrates the change in the structure of the section in round 4, and references to groups of questions that are the same as previous rounds are indicated in italics.

**4.3 Figure 1. Rounds 1–3 Employment Flowchart**

**4.3 Figure 1. Rounds 1–3 Employment Flowchart (continued)**

### 4.3 Figure 2. Round 4 Employment Flowchart

**4.3 Figure 2. Round 4 Employment Flowchart (continued)**



*User Notes:* To associate job information with the correct employer, researchers need to understand how employment information is collected during the interview. The following paragraphs describe how the data are gathered and how employers can be identified in different types of questions and across survey rounds. This discussion of the employer roster provides details specific to this section; general information on rosters is presented in section 3.2 of this guide.

In round 1, any respondent who went through the employee-type jobs section was asked to provide the names of all the employers (including family businesses at which the respondent worked in an unpaid position) for whom he or she had worked since age 14. Then, in the YEMP-1800.xx variables, each employer was assigned a number (e.g., 9701, 9702, and so on through 9707 since the highest number of jobs reported was 7) in the order in which they were reported by the youth. This number is called the unique identification number (UID) for the employer.

After the round 1 employers were assigned a number between 9701 and 9707, the respondent reported the dates he or she started and stopped working for each employer. (These questions are not represented on the CD exactly as asked; they are reordered and reported in YEMP\_STARTDATE.xx and YEMP\_STOPDATE.xx.) At this point, the survey program sorted the jobs by stop date so that the most recent employer was employer #01, the next most recent was employer #02, and so on. Key information about each employer, including the ID number and dates of employment, was organized in the employer roster. Throughout the rest of the employment section, the employer numbers remain constant, so that each variable containing, for example, the phrase “Job #01” or “Employer #01” refers to the same employer for a given respondent. In this case the variables would refer to the first employer on the roster, which is not necessarily the first employer reported by the youth at the beginning of the employment section of the interview.

In rounds 2–4, the employer information was collected in a similar manner. Respondents reported all employers since the last interview date in no particular order. As employers were reported, the CAPI program included a check for whether each employer had been reported in a previous interview. If the respondent reported a new employer, then the YEMP\_UID.xx variables contain a new number, as shown in Figure 5. If the employer had been previously reported, the employer kept the same ID number (9701–9707 for round 1 employers, 9801–9809 for round 2 employers, and so on) as it had in previous rounds. This system permits users to link employers across survey rounds, even if there was a break in employment, and to identify the round in which an employer was first reported. After the ID numbers were either continued from a previous round or newly assigned, the roster was sorted according to the stop date of each job. Therefore, employers from different rounds may be mingled on the roster; previous round

employers do **not** necessarily precede current round employers. Note that old employers for whom the respondent has not worked since the last interview do not appear on the current round's roster.

**4.3 Figure 3. NLSY97 Unique ID Numbers**

Round	Maximum # Jobs	Unique ID # Range <sup>1</sup>
1	7	9701–9707
2	9	9801–9809
3	9	199901–199909, 199999
4	9	200001–200009

<sup>1</sup> In round 3, the ID number system changed to a 4-digit year.

*Data hint* ➔

See the “Self-Employment Characteristics” section of this guide for information on the special case of respondents who had a freelance job classified as self-employment in rounds 1–3 and carried that job over into the regular employee jobs section in round 4. In certain cases, self-employment jobs are assigned a UID of 199999; see section 4.3.8 of this guide for more information.

In addition to retaining the previous ID code to permit linking across rounds, jobs reported at a previous interview retain the start date information from the previous round. For example, if a respondent began a job before the round 1 interview and continued it until the round 2 interview, the round 2 roster will contain the ID code assigned in round 1 and the round 1 start date information. However, all other information in the roster refers only to the time period since the round 1 interview date.

*Data hint* ➔

“Employer #01” is **not** necessarily employer number 9701, 9801, 199901, or 200001. The variables titled YEMP\_UID.xx provide a crosswalk between the two systems of identification. For example, if the value of the round 2 variable R24761., ‘YEMP, Employer 01 Unique ID (Ros Item),’ is 9702, then the data regarding employer 9702 from the round 1 interview match with the information reported in the employer #01 variables in round 2.

*Treatment of missing values.* As mentioned above, the NLSY97 interview collects information from the respondent on the start and stop dates of jobs and the beginning and ending dates of within-job gaps. These dates are transferred onto the individual's employment roster and additional questions within the survey are asked based on those data. For example, the length of time between jobs is calculated within the CAPI program using the job start and job stop dates, and the respondent is asked follow-up questions about the number of weeks spent actively searching for a job during each gap. If respondents report exact employment dates (e.g., no missing values are reported), the survey program proceeds without any adjustments.

If a respondent does not recall the exact month and day for an employment date, the missing information is imputed and stored in the individual's employment roster. This is done because many questions in the employment section cannot be asked if there is no month and day information, so an imputed month or day is used temporarily so that the section can be completed. For example, if the respondent does not know the start and stop days of the job, "1" is imputed for the start day and "28" for the stop day. Using these temporary days, the survey can ask questions such as those about job search activities during periods of unemployment. As in the case of jobs without missing information, the length of between-job gaps is calculated in the CAPI system using the information in the employer roster. When the respondent's answers include don't know or refuse, the length of between-job gaps is calculated from the imputed dates. Follow-up questions are then asked based on the imputed information.

When the data are being prepared for public release, the original missing values are inserted into the employer roster. At this point the employer roster reflects the actual responses given during the interview and not the temporary imputed values. Therefore, researchers can use the original answers in their analyses. However, they may wish to know what imputed values were substituted so that they can follow the correct question paths and understand the respondent's answers. A complete, detailed explanation of the imputation process is contained in Appendix 6 in the *NLSY97 Codebook Supplement*.

*Event history data.* The created event history variables (see section 4.4) can be used in conjunction with the main file information about the respondent's employment. Like the main file variables, the event history variables use two systems of identification for a respondent's employers. First, the event history variables contained in the week-by-week status (e.g., EMP\_STATUS.01.97, where "01" indicates the first week of the year "97") and dual job (e.g., EMP\_DUAL\_2.01.97) arrays use the unique ID numbers (UID) for each employer; to associate these employers with characteristic information collected during the interview, researchers must use the YEMP\_UID.xx crosswalk variables. A second set of event history variables, those providing start and stop date information (e.g., EMP\_START\_WEEK.01, EMP\_END\_WEEK.01, where "01" indicates job #01), use the employer roster line numbers to identify the jobs. The number in the title of these variables refers to the same job as the variables in the main data set with the same number, so users can compare all information about job #02, for example, without any additional ID variables. However, to compare event history start and stop date information about job #02, for example, with information in the event history week-by-week status arrays, researchers must first use the YEMP\_UID.xx crosswalk variables to identify the employer ID (9701–9707, 9801–9809, etc.) that matches job #02. See the example below to understand how this process works.

**User Notes:** The following example illustrates the structure and use of the employer roster. Most aspects of this example apply to other NLSY97 rosters as well. More general information about rosters is available in section 3.2.

### Employer Roster Creation in Round 1

**Raw data collection:** The round 1 survey asked for the names of all employers for whom the respondent had worked since age 14. Assume that a respondent named Emma reported delivering the *Smalltown Press* when she was 14, then switching companies and delivering the *County Register*, and finally working in her parents' business, Peel's Corner Store, at the time of the round 1 interview. For this example, the newspaper delivery jobs are assumed to be employee jobs and not freelance-type work. The survey then assigned a unique identification number (UID) in the order the jobs were reported: 9701 for the *Smalltown Press*, 9702 for the *County Register*, and 9703 for Peel's Store.

**Roster creation and roster sort:** After the UIDs were assigned, Emma reported the dates she started and stopped working for each employer. At this point, the survey program sorted the jobs according to stop date, so that the most recent employer was employer #01, the next most recent was employer #02, and so on. Therefore, Peel's Store (UID 9703) became job #01 on the roster, the *County Register* (UID 9702) was listed as job #02, and the *Smalltown Press* (UID 9701) was listed third. Key information about each employer, including the unique ID number and dates of employment, was organized in the employer roster. All of the information about Peel's Store is located in variables numbered #01 in the title, the *County Register* data are in variables numbered #02, and so on.

### Example: Emma's Round 1 YEMP Roster

Employer	UID	Round 1 Roster Line #
<i>Smalltown Press</i>	9701	03
<i>County Register</i>	9702	02
Peel's Store	9703	01

**Roster use in the interview:** Throughout the rest of the employment section, the employer line numbers remain constant, so that each variable containing, for example, the phrase "Job #03" or "Employer #03" refers to Emma's *Smalltown Press* job. Note that the *Smalltown Press* is **not** the third employer Emma reported at the beginning of the employment section of the interview. It became employer #03 during the roster sort because the other two jobs were more recent.

**Roster Creation in Round 2**

**Data from previous interviews:** The employer information was collected in a similar manner in subsequent rounds. Because data were available from the previous interview, they could be used in the construction of the round 2 roster. Before the survey was fielded, survey staff loaded information about each respondent into the interviewers' laptops. In Emma's case, part of this information would be the list of employers she reported in round 1.

**Raw data collection:** During the survey, respondents first provided information about employers who were current at the last interview date. Assume that Emma stated that she worked at Peel's Store for several months after the round 1 interview. Respondents next reported new employers since the last interview date in no particular order. Emma reported only one additional job, waiting tables at Steed's Diner after she turned 16. At this point UIDs were given to each employer. Because Peel's Store was previously reported, it already had a UID—9703—assigned during the last interview. Steed's Diner was a new employer in round 2, so it was given a UID of 9801.

**Roster creation and roster sort:** Emma then reported the date she stopped working at each job, and the roster was sorted according to these stop dates. At the round 2 interview, the diner job was more recent, so it was listed as job #01 on the roster, and the store became job #02. At this point, the roster contains information from multiple survey rounds. The UID and start date of the Peel's Store job are carried over from round 1, while the stop date of the store job and all the information about Steed's Diner comes from round 2. Because Emma had not worked for the *Smalltown Press* or the *County Register* since the round 1 interview, neither of those employers is listed on the round 2 roster.

**Example: Emma's Round 2 YEMP Roster**

Employer	UID	Round 1 Roster Line #	Round 2 Roster Line #
Peel's Store	9703	01	02
Steed's Diner	9801	—	01

**Roster use in the interview:** Just as in round 1, the employer line numbers remain the same for the rest of the interview. As Emma answered questions about Steed's Diner, her rate of pay, hours worked, etc., were recorded in the "Employer #01" questions. Peel's Store data were recorded in the "Employer #2" series.

**Roster Creation in Round 3 and Subsequent Surveys**

**Data from previous interviews:** This was collected as it was in round 2. Information reported in previous rounds, including the list of employers previously reported, was loaded into interviewers' laptops before the survey was fielded.

**Raw data collection:** During her round 3 interview, Emma reported her ongoing employment at Steed’s Diner, where she had been working in round 2. In addition, she went back to work at the *Smalltown Press* for a 6-month period in between interviews. Both employers retained their original UID numbers, 9801 for the diner and 9701 for the newspaper, despite the break in Emma’s employment at the latter.

**Roster creation and roster sort:** The roster is again sorted according to the stop date of each job. Since it is a current employer and does not yet have a stop date, Steed’s Diner is listed as job #01 on the round 3 roster. The *Smalltown Press* becomes job #02 since Emma’s employment there had stopped by the date of her round 3 interview. Previous jobs not reported in this round are not listed on this roster.

### Example: Emma’s Round 3 YEMP Roster

Employer	UID	Round 2 Roster Line #	Round 3 Roster Line #
Steed’s Diner	9801	01	01
<i>Smalltown Press</i>	9701	—	02

**Roster use in the interview:** These employer line numbers are in place for the duration of the interview, just as in previous rounds. Information about her employment at the diner is recorded in “Employer #01” questions, while data about the newspaper are recorded in the “Employer #02” series.

### Use of the Employer Roster in Analysis

Emma’s information, as organized in the employer rosters, can be used to examine the characteristics of her jobs at the date of each interview or over time. This example focuses primarily on the round 2 employer roster, but subsequent rounds also follow the same sequence for forming the employer roster.

As described above, Emma worked for Peel’s Store and Steed’s Diner during the period between the round 1 and round 2 interviews. Information about these employers was sorted and a roster constructed with the most recent employer appearing first. A researcher using these data would need to be aware of the impact of roster construction.

Because the roster is sorted and employers reported in different rounds may be mixed, variables with “Employer #01” in the title do not necessarily refer to employer number 9701, 9801, etc. The #01 refers solely to the order of the job as listed on the current year’s roster. The unique identification numbers provide a crosswalk between the two systems of identification. The UIDs also allow users to link employers across survey rounds and to identify the round in which an employer was first reported.

For example, Emma’s value for the round 2 variable R24761., “YEMP, Employer 02 Unique ID (Ros Item),” would be 9703—Peel’s Store. The user can identify this as an ID assigned in round 1 because it

starts with “97,” and look at the round 1 UID variables (R05311.–R05317.) to match the employer. In Emma’s case, the comparable variable for employer #01 in round 1 would have UID 9703. Therefore, the researcher knows that information about employer #01 in round 1 refers to the same job as variables about employer #02 in round 2. The variables from the two rounds can then be compared to determine if there were any changes in characteristics such as hours worked, rate of pay, occupation, etc.

The roster line numbers and UID variables in the event history data work in the same way. For example, a researcher might want to know Emma’s employment status in the first and last week of 1998. In the first week of 1998 (variable EMP\_STATUS.01.98), Emma was working at her parents’ store, so the status variable would have a value of 9703. Using this UID, researchers can link that job to all of the other information collected during the interview. For example, in the main round 2 data Peel’s Store is job #02, according to variable YEMP\_UID.02 (R24761.). Similarly, for the last week of 1998 (variable EMP\_STATUS.01.98), when Emma was working at Steed’s Diner, the status variable would have a value of 9801. The job with a UID of 9801 is employer #01 in round 2, so job characteristic data are contained in the employer #01 variables. The second set of event history variables, the start and stop dates of each job, uses the roster line numbers. For these variables, the number in the variable title refers to the same job as in the main data set. For example, the start and stop dates for Peel’s Store in the event history data (variables EMP\_START\_WEEK.02 and EMP\_END\_WEEK.02) will also have #02 in the variable title.

### 4.3.1 Employers & Jobs

In round 1, the NLSY97 collected an employment history for three types of jobs: employee jobs, freelance jobs, and military service (self-employed was collected as part of the freelance section). Subsequent surveys confirm the data gathered in the previous interview and then ask about employers, freelance jobs or self-employment, and military service since the date of last interview. This section highlights key questions asked for each job type; other characteristics of each job are described in the remaining employment subsections (e.g., “Fringe Benefits,” “Industry”).

#### *Data hint* ➔

The employer roster is the only source of information about start and stop dates of employment. The roster also contains flags indicating whether the employer was current at the date of interview, whether the job was in the military, and whether the employer was part of a paid internship experience. The interview questions that collected this information prior to the creation of the roster are not released on the data set but are shown in the questionnaire. Conversely, the roster items appear in the data set but have no questions associated with them in the questionnaire. See the introduction to Employment and section 3.2 for more information on rosters.

### Employee Jobs

In rounds 1 and 2, only respondents age 14 and older were eligible to answer the series of questions on employee jobs; in subsequent rounds, all respondents have reached age 14 and are eligible for this section. The surveys collect details on all current and previously held employee jobs at which the respondent has worked since his or her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. For each employee job, these respondents are asked about the job’s starting and ending dates and the labor force characteristics (e.g., rate of pay, type of business) of the job at its start date. If the job lasted longer than 13 weeks, the respondent reports this same information as of the job’s stop date (or as of the interview date if the job is on-going). The round 1 survey also asked respondents about their relationship to the person who hired them and to the person who recommended them for the job. There is no limit on the number of employee jobs that the respondent may report.

Additional information is collected from respondents who report a job that ended after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (or, for those age 16 and over, who report an on-going job). The first question determines whether the job is/was in the Armed Forces or a civilian job for a government agency (e.g., local, state, federal), a private or for-profit company, a non-profit organization, or a family business without pay. Respondents in the Armed Forces answer the military service questions described below. The survey then questions civilian respondents about the characteristics of each job and employer. For example, questions are asked about whether the respondent is/was covered by collective bargaining and the gender, race, and age of the respondent’s immediate supervisor. The respondent also reports what type of schedule he or she worked (e.g., regular day shift, split shift, irregular schedule). Other questions in this section gather information about the number of employees working at the same location as the respondent and the number of



employees working for that firm across all locations. One question also gathers the level of job satisfaction for each job (e.g., like it very much, think it is okay). For jobs that have ended, the respondent is asked to state the main reason that he or she left the job.

*User Notes:* If the job had already been reported during a previous interview, the start date questions were asked at that time. In this case, respondents are asked to report the above information only as it pertains to the stop date or current interview date. However, if the job had been previously reported and the respondent's total tenure was less than 13 weeks, no additional information is collected in the current interview. In this situation the job characteristics data described above are available in the previous round's data.

Some respondents reported new jobs in round 2 that ended before their round 1 interview date. (These jobs should have been reported in round 1 but were overlooked by the respondent.) In these cases no data about job characteristics were collected, but the start and stop dates are still represented in the roster.

Researchers should read the user notes in the introduction to the employment section before using employer characteristic data for analyses. These user notes contain important information about the assignment of employer ID numbers, the creation of the employer roster, and the association of employers across survey years.

### **Freelance Jobs**

In the freelance section of the questionnaire, the survey gathers information from respondents age 12 or 13 (at the survey date) about all jobs they held since age 12. Respondents age 14 and older are questioned on freelance jobs, such as snow shoveling or baby-sitting, they have held since the age of 14. For all jobs reported in this section, the respondent is first asked to state the type of job he or she had and the month and year when it began and ended. Details are then collected about the job's characteristics when it began and ended (or as of the date of the interview if the job is current). These questions ask for the usual number of hours worked per week, the amount earned per week, and the number of weekday versus weekend hours. The round 1 survey also recorded whether the respondent had help in finding the job and the relationship of the person who helped. When these responses are combined with the information collected about employee jobs, the respondent's employment history (from age 14) can be constructed by researchers. See section 4.3.12, "Work Experience," for details on employment history data.

Beginning in round 4, older respondents no longer go through the freelance jobs series. See the following paragraphs on self-employment for details.

*User Notes:* Due to an error in the way freelance jobs were listed on the roster in round 2, about 150 respondents are missing start date information for a freelance job. In some cases the information is available in the round 1 data for jobs that were previously reported. All other data about the freelance job were collected, and this problem was corrected for round 3.

### **Self-Employment**

In rounds 1–3, a respondent who was age 16 or older and reported earning \$200 a week or more at a freelance job was considered to be self-employed. In addition to the data collected for freelance jobs, self-employed respondents also reported the industry and occupation of the job, the number of employees working for them, their usual time of day to work, and the reason the job ended if it was not current.

In round 4, the structure of the employment section of the questionnaire changed. Respondents who were born in 1980–82 reported both self-employment jobs and employee jobs in the employer loop and skipped past the freelance section. In these cases, details collected for self-employment jobs are the same as those for employee jobs. Younger respondents who were born in 1983–84 reported only regular employee jobs in the employer loop and continue to list both freelance and self-employment jobs in the freelance section. This follows the same process as previous rounds; information on self-employment jobs is the same as that collected for freelance jobs.

### **Military Service**

Respondents first state in which branch of the Armed Forces they serve and whether they serve in the regular forces, the reserves, or the National Guard. The survey then collects occupational and pay information from respondents age 16 or older who report their employer as an active branch of the Armed Forces; these questions are described in section 4.3.7, “Occupation,” and section 4.3.11, “Wages.”

*User Notes:* Respondents’ answers to the class of worker question (e.g., YEMP-58500) are used to determine whether the employer is the Armed Forces or a regular employer. For each job, this question asks whether the respondent is employed by the government, employed by a private company, employed by a nonprofit organization, working without pay in a family business or farm, or a member of the Armed Forces. The data indicate that some respondents in the military do not correctly answer “member of the Armed Forces.” If another answer is given, the respondent skips the military questions and enters the regular employer series. In addition, a programming error in rounds 2–4 caused some respondents with military employment ongoing since a prior round to be directed to the regular employer questions rather than the military questions.

To account for these problems, researchers can use roster variable YEMP\_MILFLAG to identify military jobs included on the regular employer roster. This variable allows researchers to include additional respondents in military analyses or to exclude military respondents from analyses of civilian jobs.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* For employee jobs, respondents in each cohort have reported the following information in at least some survey years: start and stop dates, labor force characteristics, class of worker, collective bargaining status, and firm size. Young Men, the NLSY79, and Children of the NLSY79 respondents age 15 and older have provided similar information about military service, including pay and occupational data; Older Men reported the dates of any military service. No information on freelance jobs has been collected from the other NLS cohorts, although job information for self-employed respondents has been gathered as a part of the regular employment section. For further details, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* The employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire* asks these questions.

***Related User's Guide Section***

4.3.8 Self-Employment  
Characteristics

***CD—Main Areas of Interest***

Jobs & Employers  
Military

***CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest***

Common Variables  
Employment Gaps  
Labor Force Status  
School-Based Learning  
Self-Employment  
Training

### 4.3.2 Fringe Benefits

Questions on fringe benefits are only asked of respondents who report an employee job lasting at least 13 weeks that ended after the date of their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, or who are age 16 and over and report an on-going employee job at which they have worked at least 13 weeks. For each job meeting the above criteria, the interviewer hands the respondent a card listing typical fringe benefits (see Figure 1) and asks him or her to state the benefits available. In addition to these benefits, the survey questions respondents on the number of paid vacation days and paid sick or personal days per year to which they are currently entitled (or were entitled to when the job ended).

**4.3.2 Figure 1. Fringe Benefits Available through Employer**

<p>Medical, surgical, or hospitalization insurance which covers injuries or major illnesses off the job</p> <p>Life insurance that covers your death for reasons not connected to your job</p> <p>Dental benefits</p> <p>Paid maternity or paternity leave</p> <p>Unpaid maternity or paternity leave which allows you to return to the same job, or one similar to it</p>	<p>A retirement plan other than Social Security</p> <p>A flexible work schedule</p> <p>Tuition reimbursement for certain types of schooling</p> <p>Company provided or subsidized child care</p> <p>Employee stock ownership plans</p>
--	--

The intent of these questions is to gather information about any benefits to which respondents know they are entitled. If an employer offers a benefit that the respondent chooses not to take, it is still considered available. Benefits that are available to other employees at the company but not to the respondent at the time of the survey are not included.

**Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:** Information on fringe benefits has been collected for the NLSY79 in each survey except 1981; for the Mature Women in 1977, 1982, 1987, 1989, and 1995–2001; for the Young Women in 1978 and each survey since 1983; and for the Young Men in 1976 and 1981. Users should note, however, that benefits data were collected only for the CPS job (see the appendix for definition) for the NLSY79 through 1993. Additionally, the exact categories of benefits for which information was recorded may vary; generally, less information was collected in earlier years. Consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide* for more information.

**Survey Instruments:** These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

**Related User's Guide Section**  
4.3.3 Gaps in Employment

**CD—Main Area of Interest**  
Fringe Benefits

**CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest**  
Assets and Debts  
Employment Gaps  
Fertility and Pregnancy

### 4.3.3 Gaps in Employment

Respondents age 14 and older are asked about gaps within employee-type jobs and gaps between jobs. These periods when a respondent was not working are not counted in the various created variables summarizing total weeks worked and tenure with an employer. For more information on these variables, see section 4.3.9, “Tenure,” and section 4.3.10, “Time Spent at Work.”

**Data hint** ➔

The employer roster is the only source of information about start and stop dates of employment. The roster also contains flags indicating whether the employer was current at the date of interview, whether the job was in the military, and whether the employer was part of a paid internship experience. The interview questions that collected this information prior to the creation of the roster are not released on the data set but are shown in the questionnaire. Conversely, the roster items appear in the data set but have no questions associated with them in the questionnaire.

#### Gaps within Jobs

Regardless of how long the job lasted, the respondent is asked to report any periods of a week or more within an employee job when he or she did not work for the employer, not including paid vacations or sick days. After a within-job gap is established, follow-up questions probe for the main reason for that gap, such as on strike, on layoff, job ended but began again, or unpaid vacation or leave. Next, the respondent is asked to state the number of weeks that he or she spent looking for work or on layoff during the gap. Any respondent who is classified as not looking for work is asked for the reason (e.g., did not want to work, child care problems, vacation). Finally, female respondents who report a job that ended after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday are also questioned on employment gaps due to pregnancy or the birth of a child.

In round 4, self-employed respondents born in 1980–82 answer similar questions about gaps within a self-employed job. However, these questions are in a separate series from the questions for employee-type jobs to allow for more appropriate wording.

**User Notes:** If a respondent reported an employer in round 2 that he or she also reported in round 1, that employer will retain the round 1 ID code to permit linking across rounds (see the user notes in the introduction to the employment section). In addition, the start date information contained in the round 2 employer roster reflects the original (round 1) start date. However, all other information in the roster refers only to the time period since the round 1 interview date. For example, the round 2 roster only contains information about gaps within a job since the last interview; if researchers are interested in all gaps since the beginning of the job, they will need to examine the information collected in round 1 as well. The rosters in rounds 3 and 4 are similarly constructed; for information prior to the last interview date the researcher must examine the rosters from the previous round.

**Gaps between Jobs**

In rounds 1–3, and in round 4 for respondents born in 1983–84, the number of weeks that the respondent did not work at any employee job is calculated. In round 4, for respondents born in 1980–82, gaps when the respondent was not working at either an employee job or self-employed are identified. For each gap between jobs, the respondent is asked to state the number of weeks he or she spent working at a freelance job or searching for another employee job. (In round 4, youths born in 1980–82 were not asked about working at a freelance job during a gap since they did not report this type of job starting in this round.) Using this information, the total number of weeks spent not working, not looking for work, or not on layoff is computed for each respondent. Those who did not report search activity are questioned on the reason that they did not look for work during that period (e.g., did not want to work, child care problems, vacation). Data are also collected on the type of search activity in which the respondent participated (e.g., contacted employer directly, contacted an employment agency, placed an ad).

***User Notes:*** In rounds 1–3, the gaps section asked about periods when a respondent was not working at an employee-type job. If the respondents had any freelance jobs or self-employment, part of the gaps series asked how many gap weeks were spent working at those jobs.

In round 4, respondents born in 1980–82 reported employee-type jobs and self-employment at the same time. Both types of jobs are treated equally in the gaps section—that is, the survey program identifies weeks when the respondent was not working at either an employee or self-employed job and asks about the respondent’s activities in those weeks. In theory, these respondents would have been asked about “periods when you weren’t working” rather than “periods when you weren’t working at an employee-type job.” However, due to a programming error, these older respondents did not go through the alternate series but instead were asked the same series as younger respondents. Even though the dates in the questions asked only about weeks when the respondent was not working at any job, the question text referred specifically to “employee-type jobs.” It is not known whether any respondents were confused by this question wording. It appears that most respondents simply reported their reasons for not working and job search activities for the weeks referred to in the question text, as they would have in the alternate question series.

***Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:*** The NLSY79 records information about gaps both within and between jobs in all survey years. Data include reasons for the gap, the total number of weeks not working, stop and start dates, and job search activity during the gap. Since 1987, female respondents have been asked about periods of paid leave due to pregnancy or the birth of a child. Similar information has been collected from the Children of the NLSY79 age 15 and older since 1994. The Original Cohort respondents have provided data on gaps within jobs since the inception of the surveys; Mature and Young

Women also answered questions on gaps between jobs beginning in 1995. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

**Survey Instruments:** These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

***Related User's Guide Sections***

4.3.9 Tenure

4.3.12 Work Experience

***CD—Main Area of Interest***

Employment Gaps

***CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest***

Fertility

Fringe Benefits

Job Search

Jobs & Employers

Tenure w/ Employer

### 4.3.4 Industry

For both employee and self-employed jobs, NORC personnel code respondents' verbatim descriptors of their business or industry according to the 1990 three-digit census industrial classification system. In addition, NORC classifies freelance jobs that do not qualify as self-employment according to the type of work performed.

#### Employee Jobs

The NLSY97 asks respondents age 14 or older to report the industry of each employer as of the job's start date. Respondent descriptors of the "kind of business or industry at the job's start date"—or, if the respondent is confused by the question, "what did they make or do where you worked"—are the basis of the industrial codes. For employee jobs lasting more than 13 weeks, respondents also describe the business or industry as of the job's stop date (or at the survey date for on-going jobs). In addition, the interviewer codes whether the business was mainly manufacturing, retail trade, wholesale trade, or something else, requesting respondent help if necessary. Survey staff then code each employer's industry using the 1990 Census industrial codes.

Table 1 below summarizes the industries reported by youths with employee jobs.

*User Notes:* If the job has already been reported during a previous interview, the start date questions were asked at that time. Respondents are read a description of the industry they reported as of the last interview date and asked if there was any change between the last interview date and the current interview date (or stop date for jobs that ended). If there is no difference, the job is assigned the same industry code; if the respondent reports a change, a new industry code is assigned for the current round. However, if the job had been previously reported and the respondent's total tenure was less than 13 weeks, no additional information was collected in the current interview. In this situation the relevant data are available in the previous round's data.

Additionally, some respondents reported new jobs in round 2 that ended before the round 1 interview date. (These jobs should have been reported in round 1 but were overlooked by the respondent.) In these cases no industry information was collected.



**4.3.4 Table 1. Industry of NLSY97 Respondents  
at Current or Most Recent Employee Job**

Industry of Job #01	Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation, Public Utilities, Communications	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Svcs	Personal Services	Entertainment & Recreation Services	Professional & Related Services	Public Administration	Military <sup>1</sup>	Missing Data	Total working at an employee job
<b>Round 1</b>																
Male	126	—	96	103	24	28	517	15	109	46	91	106	4	—	27	<b>1292</b>
Female	26	—	27	30	8	17	489	17	42	71	86	147	12	—	22	<b>994</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2286</b>
<b>Round 2</b>																
Male	134	2	197	146	63	37	1092	41	136	57	189	197	10	1	17	<b>2319</b>
Female	41	—	28	58	21	16	1201	40	67	99	160	307	17	—	23	<b>2078</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2293</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4397</b>
<b>Round 3</b>																
Male	149	—	222	191	97	41	1350	44	184	54	210	211	12	3	18	<b>2786</b>
Female	33	1	17	93	40	16	1513	61	96	116	189	415	12	1	26	<b>2629</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>2863</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>5415</b>
<b>Round 4</b>																
Male	134	2	276	230	133	55	1470	40	257	68	210	234	17	—	17	<b>3143</b>
Female	34	—	27	119	64	32	1710	77	111	152	182	536	24	1	21	<b>3090</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>3180</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6233</b>

Note: This table is based on responses about the respondent's current or most recent industry at his or her current or most recent job (e.g., YEMP-37200-COD.01, YEMP-80200-COD.01). The universe is respondents who reported that their current or most recent job was a civilian employee-type job; military, freelance, and self-employment jobs are not included.

<sup>1</sup> Although this table is based on the industry variables for civilian jobs, some respondents reported their industry as military in the civilian question series. These respondents may actually be civilians, or they may be members of the Armed Forces who reported their class of worker incorrectly (see the introduction to the "Employment" section of this guide).

## Freelance Jobs

In rounds 1–3, NLSY97 youths not classified as self-employed describe the type of work they perform during the interview. NORC personnel code these verbatim descriptions for release on the CD-ROM. Because the Census codes are not appropriate for this freelance employment, the descriptions are classified using a separate coding frame with categories such as babysitting, mowing, pet care, and snow shoveling. The reporting of freelance jobs was limited in round 4 to respondents who were 12 or 13 years old as of 12/31/96; the coding of these jobs followed the same procedure as previous rounds.

## Self-Employment

For all freelance jobs reported in rounds 1–3 in which respondents are considered self-employed (age 16 or older and usually earn \$200 or more per week), the survey asked about the business or industry

classification of the job. The series of questions determining the industry was similar to that asked for employee jobs. Survey staff then coded the industry of each self-employed job using the 1990 Census industrial codes.

The structure of the questionnaire changed in round 4, based on the age of the respondent. Those born in 1980–82 reported self-employment jobs in the employee jobs section, answering industry questions like those listed above for employee jobs. These jobs were coded the same way as employee-type jobs. Younger respondents (born in 1983–84) continued to list self-employment jobs in the freelance section. If a freelance job met the earnings requirement for self-employment, the industry was coded using the 1990 Census codes.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Industry is collected each year from NLSY79 respondents; however, the jobs must meet minimum hours worked and weeks worked requirements before this information is collected. For the NLSY79, industry is coded using the 1970 (through 1993) and/or 1980 (1982–present) industrial classification codes. Industry is also coded using the 1970 and 1990 (for the CPS job only) codes for Children of the NLSY79 age 15 and older. For the Mature and Young Women, industry has been coded using 1960, 1980, and 1990 systems. The industries of Older and Young Men were recorded using 1960 codes for all years; in the final two Older Men surveys, industry was doublecoded using the 1980 system. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort’s *User’s Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User’s Guide Section*  
4.3.7 Occupation

*CD—Main Area of Interest*  
Industry & Occupation

*CD—Supplemental Area of Interest*  
Training

## **Reference**

Census Bureau. *1990 Census of Population Alphabetical Index of Industries and Occupations*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

### 4.3.5 Job Search

#### Job Search in the Weeks before the Survey

In rounds 1 and 4, questions based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) asked NLSY97 respondents age 15 or older about job search (all respondents had reached age 15 in round 4). Respondents who did not report working in the week before the survey stated whether they had been doing anything to find work during the last four weeks. If so, the interviewer recorded the actions that had been taken (see Figure 1). If the respondent looked for a job, follow-up questions then asked if he or she could have started a job in the past week if offered one and the reason why not, if applicable. A key aspect of the CPS questions is the distinction between active and passive search methods. Active methods could result in a job offer without any further action by the job seeker, such as having an interview with an employer or bidding on a contract. Passive search methods, such as picking up a job application or completing a resume, could not result in a job offer without further action on the part of the job seeker. Official statistics like the CPS consider people who have done at least one active method in the last 4 weeks to be unemployed.

#### Employee Job Search

If the respondent reports gaps between employee-type jobs since the last interview, he or she is asked whether a job search was conducted during each gap. Note that in rounds 1 and 2 only respondents age 14 or older as of the interview date were eligible for gaps questions and therefore for job search questions; all respondents are age-eligible beginning in round 3. These questions ask respondents for the number of weeks during each gap that they spent looking for work. If a job search was conducted, respondents also state what methods they used in their search, choosing from the list shown in Figure 1. If there are any weeks in the gap when respondents were not looking for work and were not self-employed, they are asked why they were not looking for work (respondents born in 1980–82 were skipped past this question in round 4).

If a job ended after the respondent's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (or, for respondents age 16 and older, if a job is on-going), the NLSY97 employment questions in each round ask the respondents if they have done anything to look for work while employed. Those who have are asked to choose from a list the specific actions they have taken (see Figure 1).

**4.3.5 Figure 1. Possible Job Search Actions**

Contacted employer directly	Placed or answered an ad
Contacted employment agency	Checked union or professional registers
Through friends or relatives	Looked at ads
Contacted a school placement center	Employer contacted you directly
Sent out resumes or filled out applications	Other (Specify)

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* For the NLSY79, information includes active and passive methods of job search used and the total number of weeks spent actively looking for work. Additionally, CPS questions similar to those described above are regularly asked of respondents in each cohort. For further details, refer to the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* The questions concerning job search in the week before the survey are found in the CPS (YCPS) section of the rounds 1 and 4 *Youth Questionnaires*. The other employee job search questions are in the employment (YEMP) section of the rounds 2–4 questionnaires.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

4.3.3 Gaps in Employment

4.3.6 Labor Force Status

*CD—Main Area of Interest*

Job Search

*CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest*

Employment Gaps

Labor Force Status

### 4.3.6 Labor Force Status

Borrowing questions from the Current Population Survey (CPS), rounds 1 and 4 of the NLSY97 asked respondents age 15 and older about their labor force status in the week before the interview (note that all respondents had reached age 15 by round 4). These respondents provided information on the characteristics of their current job (e.g., usual number of hours, type of business). Any respondent who did not report working was questioned on job search activities in the previous month. For those who reported looking for work, data on the type of search activity were also collected. Through these questions, the employment status (e.g., working, looking for work, unable to work) of the respondent can be defined according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) definition. BLS uses a similar set of CPS questions to determine the monthly labor force participation and unemployment rates for the nation.

*User Notes:* “CPS employer” is a term used in the NLSY79 to identify the respondent’s current or most recent employer using methods similar to the Current Population Survey. Researchers sometimes limit their analysis to only the CPS employer instead of considering all employers. Unlike the NLSY79, the NLSY97 does not ask specific questions that refer to the CPS employer; all employers are discussed in the employment section of the questionnaire. However, there is information that can be used to determine which job or jobs are current for a given respondent.

1. The current status flag (YEMP\_CURFLAG.xx) reports whether the respondent is currently employed at each of the jobs listed in his or her employer roster.
2. If the respondent is not currently employed at any job, the most recent job can be identified through examination of the stop dates.
3. If the respondent is currently employed at more than one job, the usual hours worked variables can be used to determine which job has more hours. (In the NLSY79, the job with more hours is classified as the CPS job if the respondent has more than one job at the same time.)

*Created Variables.* Using this CPS information, two variables were created for round 1. The first variable, CV\_ESR, provides the respondent’s employment status in the week before the survey. CV\_ESR\_COLLAPSED, the second created variable, collapses this status into four categories: employed, unemployed, not in the labor force, and in the active Armed Forces.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Current labor force status is determined for all respondents in the NLSY79 and the four Original Cohorts for each survey year and since 1994 for Children of the NLSY79 age 15 and older. However, the current labor force status questions were changed for the NLSY79 in 1994 and for the women’s cohorts in 1995 to reflect the redesign of the CPS. Users should employ caution when comparing labor force status from surveys before these years to the NLSY97. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort’s *User’s Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* These questions are found in the CPS section (YCPS) of the round 1 *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Section*

4.3.5 Job Search

*CD—Main Areas of Interest*

Created Variables

Labor Force Status

*CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest*

Job Search

Jobs & Employers

### **4.3.7 Occupation**

For both employee and self-employed jobs, NORC personnel code respondents' verbatim descriptors of their occupation according to the 1990 three-digit census occupational classification system. In addition, NORC classifies freelance jobs that do not qualify as self-employment according to the type of work performed.

#### **Employee Jobs**

The NLSY97 asks respondents age 14 or older to report their occupation for each employer. The question "what kind of work did you do" elicits information on the occupation when the job started. A follow-up question asks the respondent to describe his or her usual activities or duties on this job. The occupational classification at the job's end date (or at the survey date for on-going jobs) is solicited for all employee jobs lasting more than 13 weeks. Survey staff then code the respondent's occupation at each job using the 1990 Census occupational codes. Table 1 lists the number of youths with employee jobs in each occupation category.

*User Notes:* If the job has already been reported during a previous interview, the start date questions were asked at that time. Respondents are read a description of the occupation they reported as of the last interview date and asked if there was any change between the last interview date and the current interview date (or stop date for jobs that ended). If there was no difference, the job is assigned the same occupation code; if the respondent reports a change, a new occupation code is assigned for the current round. However, if the job had been previously reported and the respondent's total tenure was less than 13 weeks, no additional information was collected in the current interview. In this situation the relevant data are available in the previous round's data.

Additionally, some respondents reported new jobs in round 2 that ended before the round 1 interview date. (These jobs should have been reported in round 1 but were overlooked by the respondent.) In these cases no occupation information was collected.

**4.3.7 Table 1. Occupation of NLSY97 Respondents  
at Current or Most Recent Employee Job**

Occupation of Job #01	Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	Management-Related	Professional Specialty	Technicians and Related Support	Sales	Administrative Support, including Clerical	Private Household	Protective Service	Service, not Private Household or Protective	Farm Operators and Managers	Farm, Not Managerial	Related Agricultural	Precision Production, Craft and Repair	Operators, Fabricators, Laborers	Military <sup>1</sup>	Other	Missing Data	Total working at an employee job
<b>Round 1</b>																		
Male	3	2	42	5	179	64	2	6	426	14	51	76	64	344	—	13	1	1292
Female	1	—	45	3	301	150	25	13	330	2	14	15	9	69	—	10	7	994
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2286</b>
<b>Round 2</b>																		
Male	20	3	52	8	339	124	1	17	839	7	69	98	124	600	1	15	2	2319
Female	14	4	82	3	619	277	13	32	839	2	18	21	15	120	—	17	2	2078
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1678</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4397</b>
<b>Round 3</b>																		
Male	28	9	71	27	377	185	1	31	945	6	69	99	161	769	—	8	—	2786
Female	37	11	103	6	714	401	9	28	1087	1	15	21	14	168	—	12	2	2629
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1091</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5415</b>
<b>Round 4</b>																		
Male	45	11	82	51	433	223	1	51	948	7	54	107	255	864	—	8	3	3143
Female	58	17	135	29	1008	561	15	36	963	—	13	18	20	208	—	8	1	3090
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6233</b>

Note: This table is based on responses about the respondent's current or most recent occupation at his or her current or most recent job (e.g., YEMP-37500-COD.01, YEMP-80500-COD.01). The universe is respondents who reported that their current or most recent job was a civilian employee-type job; military, freelance, and self-employment are not included.

<sup>1</sup> Although this table is based on the occupation variables for civilian jobs, some respondents reported a military occupation in the civilian question series. These respondents may actually be civilians, or they may be members of the Armed Forces who reported their class of worker incorrectly (see the introduction to the "Employment" section of this guide).

## Freelance Jobs

In rounds 1–3, NLSY97 youths not classified as self-employed described the type of work they performed. NORC personnel then coded these verbatim descriptions for release on the CD-ROM. Because the Census codes are not appropriate for this freelance type of employment, the descriptions were classified using a separate coding frame with categories such as babysitting, mowing, pet care, and snow shoveling. In round 4, the reporting of freelance jobs was limited to respondents who were 12 or 13 years old as of 12/31/96; the coding of these jobs followed the same procedure as previous rounds.

## Self-Employment

For all freelance jobs reported in rounds 1–3 in which respondents are considered self-employed (age 16 or older, usually earn \$200 or more per week), the survey asked the respondent about his or her occupation or the kind of work performed at that job. The series of questions that determined the occupation is



similar to that asked for employee jobs. Survey staff then coded the occupation of each self-employed job using the 1990 Census occupational codes.

The structure of the questionnaire changed in round 4, based on the age of the respondent. Those born in 1980–82 reported self-employment jobs in the employee jobs section, answering occupation questions like those listed above for employee jobs. These jobs were coded the same way as employee-type jobs. Younger respondents born in 1983–84 continued to list self-employment jobs in the freelance section. If a freelance job met the earnings requirement for self-employment, the occupation was coded using the 1990 Census codes.

### **Military Service**

The survey questions respondents in the Armed Forces on the type of job they hold. Members of the Army, Army National Guard, Marine Corps, or their reserves report their Primary Military Occupational Specialty. Coast Guard or Navy (or their reserves) personnel report their Primary Rating. Respondents in the Air Force and Air National Guard (or their reserves) report their Primary Air Force Specialty Code.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Occupation is collected each year from NLSY79 respondents; however, the jobs must meet minimum hours worked and weeks worked requirements before this information is collected. For the NLSY79, occupation is coded using the 1970 (through 1993) and/or 1980 (1982-present) occupational classification codes. Occupation is also coded using the 1970 and 1990 (for the CPS job only) codes for Children of the NLSY79 age 15 and older. For the Mature and Young Women, occupation has been coded using 1960, 1980, and 1990 systems in various survey years. The occupations of Older and Young Men were recorded using the 1960 codes for all years; in the final two Older Men surveys, occupation was doublecoded using the 1980 system. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Section*  
4.3.4 Industry

*CD—Main Area of Interest*  
Industry & Occupation

*CD—Supplemental Area of Interest*  
Training

### **Reference**

Census Bureau. *1990 Census of Population Alphabetical Index of Industries and Occupations*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

### 4.3.8 Self-Employment Characteristics

*Rounds 1–3:* Respondents age 16 or older who usually earn \$200 or more per week at a freelance job are considered to be self-employed. The survey asks these respondents to report the industry of their job, their occupation, and their usual activities. The most common time of day they worked and the number of people who worked for them in that self-employment job are also collected. If the job ended, respondents state the reason (e.g., end of seasonal work, quit to return to school, quit to take another job).

*Round 4:* The structure of the questionnaire changed for this round, depending on the respondent's age. Those who were born in 1980–82 had mostly reached age 18 by the start of the fielding period. This group reported any self-employment (regardless of earnings) along with regular employee jobs and was skipped past the freelance section. Characteristic data for self-employment is like that collected for employee-type jobs, which is described throughout this section. Younger respondents born in 1983–84 continued to list any self-employment (freelance jobs that met earnings criteria) in the freelance section and reported employee jobs separately, as in previous rounds. Characteristic data for these jobs is the same as that collected in rounds 1–3.

**Data hint** ➔

In rounds 1–3, variable YEMP-112800 indicates that a job is classified as self-employment. In rounds 2 and 3, the freelance jobs roster is the best source of information about start and stop dates of self-employment. The roster also contains flags indicating whether the employer was current at the last interview and the current interview, as well as a unique identification code permitting these jobs to be linked across survey rounds. More information about rosters is available in chapter 3 of this guide.

In round 4, the freelance roster contains information about self-employment jobs (indicated by variable YEMP-112800) for younger respondents who were born in 1983–84. Self-employment jobs for those born in 1980–82 are indicated on the regular employment roster by the variable YEMP\_SELFEMP.xx. For more details about the round 4 structure, see the introduction to this Employment chapter.

The transition from the freelance section to the regular employee job section creates a disconnect in unique ID codes. If a respondent has a freelance job at age 16 with enough earnings to qualify as self-employed, and continues that job past his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the job will now appear on the regular employer roster rather than the freelance roster. When the job was in the freelance section, it was assigned a freelance UID. However, these UIDs cannot be transferred to the regular employer roster because the numbering system is different. On the other hand, it is misleading to assign a round 4 UID, when the self-employed job first appears on the regular employer roster, because the job was preexisting. So, to indicate that a self-employed job existed during a previous interview, it is assigned a UID of 199999 on the round 4 roster.

If a self-employed job is new in the round 4 interview—it had never been reported in the freelance section—it will be assigned a regular round 4 UID.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* In other NLS cohorts, information about self-employment is collected using the same series of questions as regular jobs. Respondents who are self-employed can be identified by examining the class of worker variables. For more information, refer to the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

*Survey Instruments:* Freelance and self-employment information is collected in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

- 4.3.1 Employers & Jobs
- 4.3.4 Industry
- 4.3.7 Occupation

*CD—Main Area of Interest*

Self-Employment

### 4.3.9 Tenure

Respondents provide the start and stop dates of each employee and freelance job, as well as military service. The survey also collects information about periods of a week or more when the respondent was not working at a given job (see section 4.3.3, “Gaps in Employment”).

#### *Data hint* ➔

The raw interview questions asking about dates of employment are not released on the CD-ROM. Instead, the answers to these questions become part of the employer roster. More information about this process can be found in chapter 3 and in the introduction to the employment section of this guide.

*Created Variables.* Using the information described above, tenure variables are created. First, the variable CV\_WKSWK\_JOB\_DLI.xx calculates tenure in weeks with an employer for the period between the job’s start date and the job’s stop date, or the current interview date for on-going employee jobs. A second variable (CV\_WKSWK\_JOB\_YR.xx.xx) lists the number of weeks the respondent worked at each employee job in each calendar year. Finally, jobs with a tenure of 13 weeks or less as of the interview date are indicated by CV\_JOB<13\_WKS.xx. Gaps within jobs are not counted toward total tenure.

If a respondent works for the same employer during more than one interview, the cumulative tenure variable will report the respondent’s total tenure with that employer from the job’s start date through the current interview date. For example, the total tenure reported in the round 2 interview will be added to the tenure previously calculated for the same employer as of the round 1 interview date.

*User Notes:* If a respondent reported an employer in a later round that he or she also reported in a previous round, that employer will retain the original ID code to permit linking across rounds (see the user notes in the introduction to the employment section). In addition, the start date information contained in the second round’s employer roster reflects the original (previous round’s) start date. However, all other data in the roster refer only to the time period since the last interview date. For example, the round 2 roster only contains information about gaps within a job since the last interview; if researchers are interested in all gaps since the beginning of the job, they should also examine the round 1 information. The roster in round 3 and later rounds is similarly constructed; for information prior to the last interview date the researcher must examine the rosters from the previous round.

Due to an error in the way freelance jobs were listed on the roster in round 2, about 150 respondents are missing start date information for a freelance job. In some cases the information is available in the round 1 data for jobs that were previously reported. All other data about the freelance job were collected, and this problem was corrected for round 3.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Information on tenure is presented in a set of created variables for the NLSY79. As with the NLSY97, if the employer was reported in the previous survey, the total weeks from each interview are added together to create a total tenure variable. For the Mature and Young Women, users may be able to create tenure variables for the later survey years by combining start and stop dates and data on within-job gaps. Consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide* for details.

*Survey Instruments:* These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*  
4.3.3 Gaps in Employment  
4.3.10 Time Spent at Work

*CD—Main Areas of Interest*  
Created Variables  
Tenure w/ Employer

*CD—Supplemental Area of Interest*  
Time Spent at Work

### **4.3.10 Time Spent at Work**

Respondents age 14 and over with employee jobs and all respondents with freelance jobs provide information about the number of hours worked each week. Those age 16 and over also report the shift usually worked at employee jobs. The number of weeks a respondent has worked for a particular employer and the job's start and stop dates are discussed in section 4.3.9, "Tenure."

#### **Employee Jobs**

Respondents age 14 or older report the number of hours per week that they usually worked at the time that a job began. For employee jobs lasting at least 13 weeks, the survey asks about the number of hours per week the respondent usually worked when the job ended (or at the time of the survey for on-going jobs). If the job has already been reported during a previous interview, the start date questions were asked at that time. In this case, respondents are asked only about the stop date or current interview date.

If an employee job ended after the respondent's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, data are collected on the respondent's regular shift (e.g., the time of day the shift began and ended, the number of weekdays and/or weekend days usually worked, the number of hours usually worked per weekday and/or weekend day).

See "Work Experience" for information on created variables related to hours worked by the respondent.

*User Notes:* In rounds 1 and 2, and part of round 3, some respondents reported working overtime hours and then listed zero for the number of overtime hours worked. These cases were skipped out of the questions that collected regular hours worked per week excluding overtime. Therefore, no data were collected on the typical number of hours these respondents worked. This problem was corrected during the round 3 field period.

Information on the usual number of hours worked is also missing in the following cases: (1) if the respondent refused to give an amount in the non-hourly wage questions or (2) if the respondent answered "don't know" to both the amount question and the estimated amount follow-up question in the non-hourly wage section. See section 4.3.11, "Wages," for an explanation of how wage data are collected.

#### **Freelance Jobs**

This section gathers information about the usual number of hours the respondent worked per week as of the job's start date. The survey also collects data on the total number of days, the number of weekday/weekend days, and the number of hours per weekday/weekend that the respondent worked when

the job began. Respondents are then asked to provide similar information as of the job's end date (or as of the survey date if the job is on-going).

### **Self-Employment**

In rounds 1–3, respondents who were age 16 or older and reported earning \$200 or more per week at a freelance job were considered self-employed. These jobs were included in the freelance section. In round 4, the structure of the questionnaire changed and respondents were divided by age. Those born in 1980–82 reported self-employment along with regular employee jobs and were skipped past the freelance section (see the Employee Jobs section above for details about time spent at work). Younger respondents born in 1983–84 continued to list self-employment in the freelance section (see Freelance Jobs above).

***User Notes:*** If a respondent reported an employer in a later round that he or she also reported in a previous round, that employer will retain the original ID code to permit linking across rounds (see the discussion about the creation of the employer roster in the introduction to the employment section). In addition, the start date information contained in the second round's employer roster reflects the original (previous round's) start date. However, all other data in the roster refer only to the time period since the last interview date. For example, the round 2 roster only contains information about gaps within a job since the last interview; if researchers are interested in all gaps since the beginning of the job, they should also examine the round 1 information. The roster in later rounds is similarly constructed; for information prior to the last interview date the researcher must examine the rosters from the previous round. See the "Self-Employment Characteristics" section of this guide for information on the special case of respondents who had a freelance job classified as self-employment and carried that job over into the regular employee jobs section in round 4.

***Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:*** Most interviews of the NLSY79 include information on usual hours worked per week and usual shift worked. The exact time the shift began and ended is available beginning in 1986. The number of hours worked and the usual shift worked have also been collected from Children of the NLSY79 age 15 and older since 1994. The Mature and Young Women regularly report the number of hours usually worked per day and per week; they report exact times shifts begin and end starting in 1995. Older and Young Men reported the usual number of hours per week only. For more information, consult the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide*.

***Survey Instruments:*** These questions are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

4.3.3 Gaps in Employment

4.3.9 Tenure

*CD—Main Areas of Interest*

Created Variables

Time Spent at Work

*CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest*

Expectations

Tenure w/ Employer

Wages & Compensation



### 4.3.11 Wages

#### Employee Jobs

Several questions are used to determine the job's rate of pay as of the start date; the rate may be defined according to different scales (e.g., per month, per week, per day, per hour). Additional information is collected on whether the respondent received any non-wage, non-salary pay (e.g., overtime, tips, commissions, bonuses, incentive pay, other pay) when the job started. For each of these types of pay, the respondent is asked to report the rate that he or she earned. For jobs lasting more than 13 weeks, the respondent is asked to report the same wage information—rate of pay and non-wage, non-salary pay—as of the job's end date (or at the time of the survey for on-going jobs).

*User Notes:* Respondents are first asked to report a time unit for their rate of pay and then to report the actual dollar amount. However, the dollar amount may not actually match the time unit reported in round 1. This is not clear in the questionnaire because the skip patterns are missing from the relevant question records; the skip patterns are indicated in the codebook. In round 1, respondents reporting a time unit of per day, per week, or other were asked to state their earnings per week in the follow-up dollar amount questions. Respondents who reported a time unit of monthly or semi-monthly were asked to state their earnings per month. The remaining categories (per hour, biweekly, per year) are as reported by the respondent. Affected questions are as follows:

Time unit question	Dollar amount questions
YEMP-19200.x	YEMP-33400.x and YEMP-33500.x
YEMP-38200.x	YEMP-52400.x and YEMP-52500.x
YEMP-62000.x	YEMP-76200.x and YEMP-76300.x
YEMP-83100.x	YEMP-97300.x and YEMP-97400.x

In subsequent rounds, the skip patterns were made clearer and the time units were adjusted to help avoid any confusion. Respondents who reported a time unit of per day were instead asked for their daily earnings, and those who listed a time unit of biweekly reported their earnings as weekly.

*Created Variables.* Two created variables describe the respondent's hourly compensation at employee-type jobs. The first, CV\_HRLY\_PAY.xx, contains hourly rate of pay and is the more traditional measure. This variable excludes overtime and performance pay. CV\_HRLY\_COMPENSATION.xx, a second created variable, calculates the respondent's hourly monetary compensation; this figure includes all extra compensation such as overtime, tips, bonuses, etc. Both variables record the respondent's compensation as of the job's stop date for each job lasting 13 weeks or more. The compensation as of the job's start date is provided for shorter jobs. Jobs lasting less than 13 weeks are identified by a third created variable (CV\_JOB<13\_WKS.xx).

### **Freelance Jobs**

The set of questions on freelance employment gathers information about the usual number of hours the respondent worked per week and the usual weekly earnings as of the job's start date. Respondents provide similar earnings information as of the job's end date (or at the survey date for on-going jobs). Researchers can use this information to estimate the respondent's hourly rate of pay.

### **Self-Employment**

In rounds 1–3, respondents who were age 16 or older and reported earning \$200 or more per week at a freelance job were considered self-employed. These jobs were included in the freelance section. In round 4, the structure of the questionnaire changed and respondents were divided by age. Those born in 1980–82 included self-employment with regular employee jobs and were skipped past the freelance section. For these jobs, respondents reported wage information in the same questions described in Employee Jobs above. Younger respondents born in 1983–84 continued to list self-employment in the freelance section (see Freelance Jobs above) and reported the same wage information as in rounds 1–3.

*User Notes:* If the employee or freelance job was reported during a previous interview, the rate of pay as of the start date was collected at that time. In this case, respondents are asked only about the rate of pay at the stop date or current interview date. However, if the job had been previously reported and the respondent's total tenure was less than 13 weeks, no additional information was collected in the later round. In this case the relevant information is available in the previous round's data.

Additionally, a few respondents reported new jobs in round 2 that ended before the round 1 interview date. (These jobs should have been reported in round 1 but were overlooked by the respondent.) In these cases no wage information was collected.

### **Military Service**

Respondents in the Armed Forces report their pay grade when they entered and when they left (or at the date of the survey for current members). Pay grades are a pay level classification system associated with ranks of military personnel and used by all branches of the military.

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Wage data for the NLSY79 are available but have a few differences from the NLSY97. NLSY79 respondents report receiving non-wage, non-salary pay, but exact amounts are not specified. Further, wage data were collected differently before 1994, when the CPS section of the survey was redesigned. For the Original Cohorts, rate of pay is available for the CPS job and for many dual or intervening jobs. Refer to the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide* for details.

*Survey Instruments:* The employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire* contains these questions.

*Related User's Guide Section*

4.8.2 Income

*CD—Main Areas of Interest*

Created Variables

Wages & Compensation

*CD—Supplemental Areas of Interest*

Income

Self-Employment

Tenure w/ Employer

Time Spent at Work

### 4.3.12 Work Experience

From the data collected on employee jobs and freelance jobs, researchers can construct a longitudinal record for the respondent's employment history from age 14 to the current interview date.

Survey staff provide created variables, which summarize different aspects of a respondent's labor force activity, for employee jobs held since the age of 14. The various sets of variables calculate weeks worked, hours worked, and the number of jobs held across difference time frames. See Table 1 below for the description and title of each variable.

In addition, a smaller set of variables is provided for self-employment since January of the year each respondent turned age 18 and for self-employment and employee jobs combined.

**4.3.12 Table 1. Work Experience Created Variables**  
Prefix of "CV\_" (e.g., CV\_WKSWK\_JOB\_DLI.xx)

Variable Description	Employee-Type Job	Self-Employed Job	All Jobs
Weeks worked at each job, calendar year	WKSWK_JOB_YR.xx.xx	—	—
Weeks worked at each job, since last interview	WKSWK_JOB_DLI.xx	—	—
Weeks worked at any job, calendar year	WKSWK_YR_ET.xx	WKSWK_YR_SE.xx	WKSWK_YR_ALL.xx
Weeks worked at any job, since last interview	WKSWK_DLI_ET	WKSWK_DLI_SE	WKSWK_DLI_ALL
Total # of jobs held, calendar year	TTL_JOB_YR_ET.xx	TTL_JOB_YR_SE.xx	TTL_JOB_YR_ALL.xx
Total # of jobs held, since age 14	TTL_JOB_EVER (age 14–19) TTL_JOB_EVER (age 20+)	—	—
Total # of weeks worked, since age 14	WKSWK_EVER (age 14–19) WKSWK_EVER (age 20+)	—	—
Total # of hours worked, calendar year	HOURS_WK_YR_ET.xx	HOURS_WK_YR_SE.xx	HOURS_WK_YR_ALL.x x
Total # of hours worked, since age 14	HOURS_WK_EVER (age 14–19) HOURS_WK_EVER (age 20+)	—	—

*Comparison to Other NLS Surveys:* Total number of weeks worked and total weeks of tenure variables have been constructed for each cohort; consult the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide* for more information on the precise survey years in which these variables are available.

*Survey Instruments:* The questions used to construct the created variables are found in the employment section (YEMP) of the *Youth Questionnaire*.

*Related User's Guide Sections*

4.3.9 Tenure

4.4 Event History

*CD—Main Area of Interest*

Created Variables